

NEWS AND COMMENT IN THE WORLD OF ART

By HENRY McBRIDE.

After a disappearance from view of several years Jerome Myers has reappeared, and the twenty or so pictures he has been showing in the Milch Galleries have given great pleasure to the admirers of his subtle art and ought to widen his favor. He already occupies a unique and sure, albeit a somewhat lonely position. He belongs to no special clique or school. He is not certain of New York nor of this time, although he can be seen frequently upon the lower East Side at the city gathering material for his pictures. He is just Jerome Myers, but he may be congratulated on being that.

One has to make allowances for him. One is conquered practically against one's will by all of the great artists, so it is no reproach to Mr. Myers to say that he erects as many barriers against light lovers as do the great. It is on the other hand pleasant to see that there are enough among us to encourage him and keep him going who make these concessions. One or two charges of a technical nature are urged against him faintly at times and then forgotten by the very persons who say these faults in others are fatal. It is a sign of taste, however, to know when virtues outweigh faults; although in Mr. Myers's case it must be said at once that no Solomon is required to judge when the scales hang down so evidently upon the right side.

"They say" that his pictures look like pictures. This is true, they do. That the accusation in Mr. Myers's case is not heinous may be easily proved. There are half a dozen painters in America who have achieved conspicu-

ous positions in the Academy and in the auction rooms who paint not art, but "pictures." Without an atom of real talent they nevertheless do things that look like echoes of Corot or Israels or Monticelli, or whoever happens to be in fashion. It is one of the most disturbing things that the student of the modern game has to face that these men, in direct proportion as they are cheaters, gain fortune. It happens, then, that the vindication of Mr. Myers lies in the simple fact that he is not a best seller.

His pictures, although they are pictures, are not like Corot's nor even Monticelli's, although with this last comes Mr. Myers's nearest affiliation to any on the long list of acknowledged celebrities. The latter, like Mr. Myers, loved to fuse colors until they became enameled. Both put on touches as though they were working in cloisonné, and are so enamored of the effect that they are unaware that their enamel at times jumps out of value. There is no necessity, however, to insinuate that there has been an imitation—it is merely a slight and superficial resemblance of temperament between the two artists.

Enough having been said to hint that Mr. Myers is a real artist and not a copyist, the actual benefits that Mr. Myers obtains from his Old World and old time manner of painting may be stated without blush. His pictures are among the few to be produced nowadays that can be hung without sense of incongruity among works of other periods. This is proof of nothing in particular, but at least it is a point that collectors consider.

The artist was present in the Milch Gallery when I visited the exhibition, and it happened that a lady who came in stepped forward to introduce herself to the painter, saying: "I meant to have written you at the time of the Morten sale at the American Art Association that I saw your painting on the wall next to a Degas and a Renoir, and that although I consider that to have been a severe test I thought your picture bore it splendidly. I was prevented from writing at the time, but I thought I would like to tell you this." Mr. Myers expected properly pleased. I mention the incident, as I too had remarked the sobriety and naturalness of the Myers picture even in the formidable neighborhood of the Degas pastel.

Is Greenwich Village Really Psychic?

"Psychochromes," by Leon Engers Kennedy, have been exposed to public view in the Paint Box Gallery on Washington Square for some time past and no undue disturbance has occurred; no windows smashed, no noses tweaked, no riotous processions nor letters to the public press; yet Mr. Kennedy insists that an advance in art has been made, that this is a new movement in which for the first time "the eye of the soul directs the hand of the craftsman." The absolute outside, the "more than usual calm" of Greenwich Village, during the last month may mean that Greenwich Village doesn't "care a particular damn" for psychics, or else, as readers of Don Marquis might infer, she is quite fed up with it, and having done with it, is ready to pass it on to tourists.

Tourists may get shopped goods in Greenwich Village, but they do also get, when they venture into the precinct, a whiff of the real thing in the way of atmosphere that repays them for the journey. The psychic portrait artists are so youthful, the salesmen and salesladies in the picture galleries are so encephalic and unworldly. The clients who enter seem more like friends than clients—perhaps they are!—and laugh and joke and never look at the pictures. It is as like the early glad days of "La Bohème" as possible. Anything more different from the norm and by the Paint Box Art Gallery couldn't possibly be imagined.

There is just enough dust on the floor to relieve the visitor from all worry as to the disposal of the ashes from his cigarette, and in the fireplace there are hearth and hearth of ashes, last year's and this year's. Before the fireplace are one or two early-Victorian upholstered chairs, now somewhat dingy, but still quite comfy. There is no fire in the fireplace. That is reserved for gala occasions or for evenings when there are more around. The heat is supplied by an electric furnace. Just because I really wanted to know, and not at all because I'm a newspaper reporter, I asked the genius loci, also somewhat dusty, like the chairs, but with a kindly glint in his young eyes, whether the electric furnace was expensive or not.

"Oh, no, not at all. That's why we have it. It's actually cheaper than the wood we burn. Last winter nothing would warm up this place, so I got the electric stove to help take the chill off."

"How much is it?" I persisted, for I really wished to know.

"Well, I can't say precisely," said the genius loci, blushing—he was not Leon Engers Kennedy, by the way, "but we only pay \$15 a month for the whole shooting match you see, and that includes the lights of the gallery in there and the kitchen besides."

"Oh, I see, you can't detach the stove from the rest of the bill?"

"No, but I know its cheaper than wood. Wood is just awfully expensive."

This strictly financial but vague conversation was interrupted by two young women who approached with a large pasteboard box from which they abstracted a new hat, which they proceeded to place on my young man's head. "It is a wonderful fit," they said as they stood back a bit to get the effect. I didn't think it was myself, but the genius loci was quite different to his new hat, and winked to me amiably to prove it.

"What do you think?" said one of the young women, who being plumper than the other was probably Musetta. "Mimi got her pocketbook picked up today."

"Why should we worry?" said the young man, shrugging his shoulders carelessly and trying to resume conversation with me.

"But these were three dollars in it," insisted Mimi. "Luckily I had bought your hat before I missed it."

"This ought to teach you a lesson not to carry money with you when you venture up town among those thieves and robbers," said the genius loci, laughing merrily to dissipate the



"Wash Day" (Lady Orpen, by Sir William Orpen; on view Knoedler Galleries.

false severity in which he had cloaked his reproach.

"Oh, but I must tell you how sweet they were to me at Stern's," continued the young woman. "As soon as I missed my purse I went to the lost and found bureau in Stern's, thinking it might be returned there, you know, and the clerks said: 'Can't we help you? May we lend you enough to get back to Washington Square?' Wasn't it sweet of em. I never cared for Stern's particularly before, but now I shall always go there."

Before leaving this truly delightful art gallery I glanced about again at the psychic portraits. They are not so awful as you might imagine. In fact, I may say that they are the very best psychic portraits I have ever seen. For one thing, they are genuinely psychic. Mr. Kennedy's self portrait proves that. He has that peculiar glassiness of eye that they all have. They see things that other people do not see. But he didn't see me. I was fortunate enough to get there during one of his absences. Not that I'm afraid of him at all. Oh, no; for he doesn't tell you things that you don't wish to know about yourself. The majority of the soul analyses that go with the portraits are strictly helpful and laudatory. Still I didn't wish for one.

Lady Orpen Excellent as a Laundress.

Of the several exhibitions in the galleries of M. Knoedler & Co., that of the Whistler lithographs makes the most certain appeal to connoisseurs. It is unusually complete, with many impressions that are seldom seen. Each picture is a delight, and much for the eye in its delight. The choice of the artist is quite touch as for the subject. No modern has placed his figures in his compositions with such sureness and such apparently careless ease. The lithograph of the "Nursemaids" is an instance—the figures are as nicely spotted as though they were flowers in a bouquet.

In the main gallery a new large portrait of Wilson by Louis Mark has been placed. It is not so much a portrait as an allegory. Back of the President can be seen a pale reflection of Christ on the cross, and at one side there is a skull and at the other a legend accompanying the picture implies that all those who give a great prize to the world pay a great price for the privilege or honor. Nervous people will be apt to jump to the conclusion that the work is portentous, but as the President in Mr. Mark's portrait clearly shows the effects of great nervous strain, it may be hoped that Mr. Mark means he has paid the price already. As a likeness it is by no means the least of the Presidential series the Knoedler Galleries have shown us, but it survives to posterity it will be chiefly as a curiosity.

Another painting in this gallery that attracts attention is Sir William Orpen's portrait of Lady Orpen doing the family wash. Like Mr. Mark's portrait of the President, one is not sure whether the allegory harks forward or backward. It may be that Lady Orpen really did do the laundry in days long gone and that by way of reward her husband immortalized her charming efficiency; or, it may be, with all this democracy that we hear so much about staring us in the face, that Sir William has gone peering into the future, when all of our wives will do our laundry or not have it done, and has shown us a Lady Orpen triumphing over Bolshevism, the wash tub et al.

In still another gallery at Knoedler's the pictures of ballet girls by Leon Krohl are to be seen. Mr. Krohl is sometimes called the Degas of America, but this is most unfair to Mr. Krohl. It is not a compliment to an artist to call him an echo of another artist, and so in justice to Mr. Krohl it ought to be stated that his ballet girls are not at all like those of Degas.

Manchester Not Afraid of Barnard's "Lincoln."

The following letter recently appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*, addressed to the editor. It exhibits a healthy tone:

"Sir: It will interest our fellow citizens who have taken part so warmly in the recent welcome to President Wilson, and who know the importance of perpetuating the new amity between this country and the United States, to



"President Wilson," by Louis Mark; on view Knoedler Galleries.

more rugged and the more natural the statue shall be found the better pleased shall we be in the north with the representation. We are not of that brood of artists who would paint Cromwell without his wart, nor would either Cromwell or Lincoln approve of such definition of themselves. Yours, &c., "Ryndals Library, January 1."

Notes and Activities in the Art World.

Flowers and flower gardens have attracted almost all the landscape painters at intervals, but for Miss Anne Winegar, who is holding an exhibition in the Braus Art Galleries, the attraction has proved constant. All of her oil paintings are devoted to such themes.

She has had the advantage of painting in some enticing regions, and the gardens she celebrates have stone walks, with steps and stone vases and great trees to throw deep shadows upon them. Certain of the pictures show stone gates to the gardens, with rounded hills at the back, with more than a suggestion of California in them, but all, it is said, were achieved somewhere in the Bronx.

Miss Winegar's sense of color is pleasant and her sympathy with outdoor flowers is unquestioned. Among her most successful studies are those in which "Tiger Lilies," "Meadow Rue" and "Phlox and Lyme Grass" appear.

The work of Walter Sickert, which is little known in America, always gets considerable attention both in London and Paris. He seldom exhibits nowadays, but when he does he can be relied upon, says Mr. Knoedler, to cause a considerable flutter in the dove-cote. After a retirement of some years, he now emerges, says Mr. Knoedler, at the Little Eldar Gallery in Great Marlborough street, which is rapidly acquiring an enviable reputation for the quality of the art it supports.

Many of the pictures date some years back; others, like the remarkable fine portrait of the artist in his latest metamorphosis of hirsute adornment and further disguised under the misleading title "The Bust of Tom Sayers," are of quite recent date. But Mr. Sickert is not an artist of changing moods and "periods."

"Indeed, the art historian of the future will have some difficulty in dating his pictures. Mr. Sickert found his mode of expression many, many years ago, and he has followed it ever since without deviation. In men of lesser calibre this might lead to monotony. Not with Mr. Sickert, who never allows his style to degenerate into mannerism, simply because he is keenly and sympathetically interested in the subjects of his choice and is far too



"Pueblo Indian," by Maurice Sterne.

amity which in itself is almost the equivalent of a League of Nations for the maintenance of peace), to be informed of a further step that is in the power of the city to take at the present time, by which we may express in symbol what Manchester has always felt in brotherhood toward the United States. I am referring to the possibility of the acquisition of the Barnard statue of Lincoln as an ornament and giving the great President of the past as worthy a welcome as we have done to the great President of the present.

"Let me say, in conclusion, that the criticisms which have been passed upon this statue as a work of art will probably be found to be of a very exaggerated character. Lincoln was probably as far removed from an Apollo Belvedere as it is possible to be, but it is not fair to the sculptor to criticize him for Lincoln's physical defects. The



"The Poet," by Leon Krohl, Macdowell Club Exhibition.

humble in his attitude toward nature to impose his style upon her.

"The fascination of his work is difficult to explain. More often than not he affects a lowliness of key which verges upon dinginess, and he has a marked preference for subjects of a rather sordid nature; the Camden Town murder was exploited by him in innumerable pictures and drawings; blousy women in poorly furnished bedrooms with plain iron bedsteads, Venetian putain, tawdry suburban music halls, life in the slums—these are the motifs that engage his attention. But he has nothing of the bitterness and irony of a Toulouse de Lauree or a Forain.

"The most sordid subject is glorified by his sympathetic interest, and in everything he does there is the thrill and the thrill of life and the vibration of atmosphere. His tone is low, but never colorless. There is a suggestion of trembling light in the darkest passages, and the values are set down with unerring sureness. Sickert is a master of form. His drawings are ample proof. But in his paintings the solid forms are not so much drawn as built up, touch by touch, of tone values and light struck surfaces that have no definite contours. His derivation is difficult to trace, though he has learnt something both from Whistler and Degas—the chalk study (No. 31) and the pencil drawing (No. 23) illustrate the two influences. But what is best in his art is entirely his own. This property he distributes generously among his numerous pupils. There is a whole group of talented younger artists who will carry on his tradition and who are indebted to him for all they know."

The death of W. M. Rossetti, who was associated so closely with the history of art in the mid-Victorian era, has brought an avalanche of reminiscences to the London press. The writer in the *Westminster Gazette* recalls a curious and very outspoken comment that Mr. Rossetti once made upon Ruskin.

"The fact is now well known," he wrote, "that the mind of this vigorous and subtle thinker, great scholar and most generous and in many respects admirable man broke down at times; to blink the fact would be useless. I gather that the year 1860, when he was abroad, was the first year in which he showed something of a morbid habit of mind, and in his hypochondria, I might add the expression of my own opinion that the great ascendancy which Thomas Carlyle obtained toward this time over the mind of Ruskin did him more harm than good, Carlyle being one of those strong but extreme men who may brace very great natural gifts with a superabundance of the innate function of more delicate organisms. Personally I did not from first to last witness any symptom of impaired reason in Ruskin. He always presented the aspect of a man of very sensitive mind and feelings, somewhat strait-laced, overstrained, and a little liable to take a contrary or perverse bias—in the sense that when there was every fair presumption and anticipation that he would be well pleased and affirmative he turned out to be punctilious and negative."

Mr. Winlock's description of the ancient Egyptian portrait group, "Iny and Rennut," excavated in 1913 and purchased by the Metropolitan Museum, appears in the *Bulletin*. He says in part:

Iny and his wife sat upon two chairs with legs crossed. At a first glance it would appear that one broad seat is intended for the sculptor has left out the chair legs which should appear between the two figures. But the drawings on the stela on the back of this statue and the similar little group published in the *Bulletin* of October, 1916, show that two ordinary chairs are meant. Iny's hands lie in his lap, the left one holding a handkerchief. "His wife, the beloved from the bottom of his heart, the lady of charms before all people, Rennut," sits beside him with a meek and bit less right arm around his shoulders. If they make a rather stiff picture and their affectionate attitude is a little stilted to our way of thinking, there is many a family photograph album of a generation ago in which the devoted couple are no less stiff and conscious or more at ease than this ancient Egyptian pair.

Both wear the enormous curled periwigs of their day, the man's to the shoulders, the woman's longer and bound about the forehead with a band of lotus flowers. Iny wears a thin linen shirt with short, pleated sleeves, a long skirt with a wide pleated apron in front, and woven papyrus sandals. Rennut has on her breast the "broad collar" made up of rows of amulets and flower petals, and a long, tightly fitting garment knotted on the right side. Her feet are bare. Lines of inscriptions on the man's skirt, across the front of the pedestal and behind the chairs on either side are introduced decoratively.

The Metropolitan Museum statue is 2 feet 10 inches high, carved of fine white limestone. When found, the head of the man had been knocked off and used by somebody as a maul, so that the features were badly battered; a great silver had been broken off the body down as far as the waist, and the two forearms had been hammered away. The result was that the figure was rather unsightly, but so many traces remained to guide a restoration that it was decided to replace the missing parts. This was done in plaster, following the outlines so conscientiously that one can be no doubt that the statue of the man as restored is a faithful representation of its original form. No other part of the group was touched.

The librarian of the Metropolitan Museum of Art has requested from William Harris, Jr., a copy of the "three sheet" poster made by Charles Buckles Falls of Fay Bainter in "East Is West" at the Astor Theatre. The poster is to be displayed in the library of the museum as a fine example of commercial art. Yesterday he bought another and larger poster by Mr. Falls. Mr. Falls, who was appointed a member of the Marine Corps by Major-General George Barnett in recognition of his poster work during the war, is to leave for Haiti on Saturday to do some new work for the Marine Corps.

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